

**Remarks by**  
**Acting Administrator Brigham McCown**  
**Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration**  
**United States Department of Transportation**  
September 21, 2005

Public Meeting on Assuring Integrity of Gas Distribution Pipelines  
Westin Park Central Hotel  
Dallas, Texas

First of all, welcome to Texas, and to Dallas.

On behalf of U.S. Transportation Secretary Mineta, thank you for being here today. I'm especially excited to have an opportunity to attend this meeting today.

This is the third in a series of public meetings on pipeline distribution integrity management.

Although the Department of Transportation has been in the pipeline business awhile, our agency.... PHMSA is officially six months old.

In many ways we are new. We have adapted to changing technology, practices, and ideas.

At the same time, we have kept the best of the way we have been doing business, and we have committed ourselves to achieving excellence.

These public meetings are an integral component of our overall strategy.

We are committed to this way of doing business – frequent and open discussion about concepts and working together to improve safety.

Distribution is of course the part of the pipeline system closest to where people live and work – so we have a special interest in finding opportunities to improve safety.

We know the diversity among operators in this part of the business is a very significant factor.

In the past we defined safety problems with the gas distribution systems as distinct from the other parts of the pipeline industry.

We know there are significant differences in the design of gas distribution pipelines systems, compared to their counterparts already under integrity management regulation. These differences pose many challenges in applying techniques currently in use.

And of course, we appreciate and understand that gas distribution pipelines are almost entirely under the regulatory oversight of state agencies.

We are excited about the extensive participation of state agencies and operators in exploring the opportunities to enhance safety.

We are here to discuss the latest in ideas from a diverse group which includes operators, regulators, public safety representatives, state commissioners, emergency responders, and standards organizations.

On behalf of the agency, thank you again for attending.

We look forward to hearing from you all today.

Your ideas, opinions, and suggestions are extremely important to us, and will be taken into serious consideration before we finalize our report in the near future.